

Remarks by U.S. Consul General Jake Walles

Ramallah Iftar

September 8, 2008

As Prepared

Ahlan wasahlan, wa Ramadan Mubarak.

Mr. Prime Minister, friends:

I am very pleased to see so many good friends here tonight. It has become a tradition for me in recent years to host an iftar in Ramallah, and every year it seems to grow larger and larger. Throughout the year, you graciously host me and my colleagues, providing us with great friendship and assistance. It is a pleasure to be able to host so many of you tonight and to return the favor. I am joined in this event by an outstanding team of people at the U.S. Consulate General in Jerusalem and the USAID mission and also by General Dayton. I hope you will have a chance to meet them and to renew the close ties between Americans and Palestinians.

At this significant time of year, I want to emphasize the special and important relationship between the American and Palestinian people. The United States is committed to helping you realize an independent, democratic state of Palestine, living in peace and security. We believe that Palestinians should enjoy the same blessing of freedom that Americans do. All of us on the American team are committed to continuing to work with you over the coming year to achieve peace in this land and to build the foundations of that Palestinian state.

This is an election year in the United States, and we will have a new President in a few months. A new administration will set its own priorities, but peace in the Middle East has been a priority for every U.S. Administration for many decades, and I am sure that it will be the same for the new President who will take office in January.

Ramadan is a time of reflection, humility and charity. These are also universal values, and we share them regardless of our faith. We hope that the coming year will be a time of peace, happiness and continued friendship among us.

Once again, let me thank you for joining us tonight and for your friendship and cooperation throughout the year. It is a great pleasure to me and my colleagues to be able to celebrate this Ramadan evening with you.

Ramadan Kareem. Kul a'am wa antum b-khayr.